

# Creative Growth of Children and Adults as a Condition of ESD



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## Abstract

*The paper deals with a definition of child's creativity, the concept of ESD and the significance of children's and adults' creative growth for implementing ideas of ESD (in the areas of environmental, economic and social science). Different kinds of child's creativity and the connections among them are analyzed. The paper also emphasizes the necessity to change the paradigm of education and training of kindergarten and elementary school teachers, since ESD implies development of creativity not only in children but also in teachers and parents. The theory is explained on the example of the author's program 'Nature is Our Home', which has been widely used in many Russian pre-school institutions for many years. The program is based on the principle of integration of different kinds of children's activity. An emphasis is made on supporting the child's initiative and self-dependence, which is a necessary condition for creative growth. Special attention is also paid to establishment of creative environment (mini-labs for experimenting, creative workshops etc.) The paper studies in detail both the obstacles to child's creative growth, and the ways in which teachers and parents can encourage children creativity. Some specific examples are included from actual pre-school teaching experience of child's creativity. For instance, when children staged plays, solved problems, constructed things, engaged in theatrical and musical activities, drawing, storytelling or experimenting. Additional focus of the paper is on the project-oriented exploration as a form of creative growth of children, parents, teachers and students.*

**Key words:** child's creativity, ESD, educational program

## Introduction

*What is creativity?*

Creativity is viewed as a human activity at the highest level, aimed at knowledge and transformation of the natural and social world around an individual. The individual himself changes during the creative process (his or her thinking and character). Specific trait of

creativity is discovery of something new and non-standard: new ideas, inventions, pictures, architecture, etc. Creativity is an inherent part of childhood, it is closely linked to development of imagination, to emotional perception of the surrounding world by a child. Creative people are said to have kept many things from their childhood. Creative activity always makes children feel happy. Stereotypes don't weigh down on children. They don't always know the ready solutions to problems that are well-known to adults, children try to find their own way solving them. Children ask many questions and show tremendous interest in the world around them. Creativity is linked to the ability to foresee the outcomes of one's actions, to imagine how different situations may develop. Famous psychologist Lev Vygotskyi (Vygotskyi, 1991) paid much attention to child's creativity and imagination.

*Why creativity is the vital condition for implementation of ESD ideas?*

ESD means finding non-standard solutions to problematic and new issues. ESD means positive emotional attitude of children towards nature that is impossible without artistic, musical and other images of nature in the minds of preschool children. ESD means a support for children's initiative, rights of children, his or her research activity. Sometimes pedagogues consider teaching and creativity to be incompatible. But the experience demonstrates that creative children have more stimuli for learning, and they learn more easily. Children find self-actualization in creative activities.

*What do we need for development of children's creative initiative?*

- Growth-encouraging environment to support the initiative in kindergartens and at home.
- The pedagogues should support in children the interest for new knowledge, for unorthodox solutions; children should have a right to choose and communicate in a form of dialogue; special teaching techniques should be organized for children (creative tasks, set up non-standard situations to solve). Children make a great number of discoveries, but they are not always understood and appreciated by adults. Often it is more important for an adult that the child should reach a "right" solution, while for the child the process of finding different solutions is more significant.
- Support for creative initiative in the family.
- Creative activities of the adult persons themselves.

*What problems are characteristic of modern education system?*

There is a problem: many pedagogues concentrate their efforts on teaching their subject, and think that creative activities are of secondary importance. Children are taught “to follow the pattern” and their knowledge is estimated by means of tests that exclude creative tasks, because they can’t possibly have a single answer. Thus adult stereotypes are imposed on minds of children. Modern children have very limited contacts with nature, although these contacts are the foundation of children creativity and they form environmentally-friendly behavioral patterns.